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ABSTRACT

Nevada high school seniors were surveyed in 1986 to provide high school and college planners with information about students' demographic characteristics, high school experience, and postsecondary plans. Factors influencing students' choice of postsecondary institutions and students' impressions of the University of Nevada System institutions were also determined. A total of 5,681 surveys were completed for a response rate of 60%. Findings include: 59% of respondents intended to enroll in a postsecondary program in the year following their graduation, 82% intended to continue their education sometime in the future; 58% intended to pursue a two-year or four-year degree program, 15% intended to complete a vocational/technical program, and 9% intended to take job-related or self-improvement courses; 57% of students planning to continue their education wanted to study in Nevada; 60% of college-bound students planned to attend a public college; 43% of Nevada students planned to attend a postsecondary institution out of state; and 86% of students expected to work to help finance college, 78% expected parents or relatives to provide help, and 66% expected aid from grants, scholarships, or loans. Recommendations and the questionnaire are included. (SW)

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POSTSECONDARY PLANS OF NEVADA HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS:

A Report on the 1986 Statewide Survey of Nevada High School Seniors

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Nevada System Chancellor's Office designed and administered a survey questionnaire to 9,413 Nevada high school seniors in the spring of 1986. Five thousand six hundred eighty-one surveys were completed and returned for a response rate of 60%, a sample size sufficient to ensure statistical validity. The survey was designed to provide secondary and postsecondary educational planners valuable information concerning demographic characteristics, high school experience, and postsecondary plans of this group. Survey results have been compiled and for the first time, valuable comprehensive and timely data on Nevada high school seniors and their postsecondary plans are available to the state. Highlights of the report include:

Postsecondary Educational Plans

- 59% of survey respondents intend to enroll in a postsecondary educational program in the year following their graduation.
- 82% of survey respondents intend to continue their education sometime in the future. 58% of these respondents intend to pursue a two- or four-year degree program, 15% intend to complete a vocational/technical program, and 9% intend to take job-related or self-improvement courses.

Nevada Attendance

- 57% of students planning to continue their education plan to do so in Nevada.

Prefer Public Institution

- 60% of students planning to continue their education prefer to attend a public institution, 60% prefer to attend a four-year college, and 40% prefer to attend a two-year college.

Out-of-State Attendance	• 28% of students planning to attend a community college plan to attend an out-of-state community college. • 43% of students planning to attend a four-year college plan to attend an out-of-state college. • A total of 2,221 Nevada students (43%) plan to attend a postsecondary institution out of state.
Student Financial Support	• 86% of responding students expect to work to help fund their postsecondary education, 78% expect parents or other relatives to help fund their education, and 66% expect assistance from grants, scholarships, or loans.
Early Decision	• Students who intend to continue their education after high school make that decision early; 72% before their senior year in high school.
College Choice Factors	• Students ranked the availability of a particular program of study and the academic reputation of an institution as the two factors most significant in determining their choice of college.
Positive Impressions of UNS Institutions	• Seniors report a positive impression of UNS institutions. Institutions were ranked on cost of attending, availability of financial aid, academic programs, and reputation.
Satisfied with High School Experience	• Most Nevada high school seniors are satisfied with their overall high school experience and believe their high school prepared them well for their intended postsecondary plans.

Overall, the survey results indicate that a majority of Nevada's high school students intend to continue their education. The University of Nevada System will prepare to meet this increased demand, and to offer the high quality programs of study and training that are desired by graduating seniors.

POSTSECONDARY PLANS OF NEVADA HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS:

A Report on the 1986 Statewide Survey
of
Nevada High School Seniors

The University of Nevada System Chancellor's Office proposed in the spring of 1986 to design and administer a survey questionnaire to all Nevada high school seniors in order to learn more about them and their postsecondary plans. The survey was designed to provide secondary and postsecondary educational planners valuable information concerning demographic characteristics, high school experience, and postsecondary plans of this group. Additional information on factors influencing students' choice of postsecondary institutions and students' impressions of the University of Nevada System (UNS) institutions was also collected from those students indicating postsecondary educational plans.

The pool of recent high school graduates has traditionally formed the core of incoming freshman classes at institutions of higher education. Enrollment projections, financial aid planning, and institutional program decisions are influenced not only by the numbers in this group, but also by their postsecondary educational plans. In contrast to national trends, Nevada, a growing and dynamic state, has maintained a healthy number of high school graduates. Predicted dramatic declines have not materialized in either the pool of high school graduates or in enrollments at UNS institutions. High school graduates declined slightly from a peak of 9,599 in 1982 to a low of about

9,000 in 1985, and appear to have increased to about 9,400 in 1986. Headcount enrollments at UNS institutions have actually increased nearly 10% over this same period.

In contrast to this very positive enrollment trend at UNS institutions is a more negative student "migration" trend. Nevada is one of sixteen states whose out-migration of students is larger than its in-migration (National Center for Education Statistics, 1981). Over the last five years, an increasing number of Nevada students taking the ACT assessment exam have indicated an intention to leave the state to pursue their postsecondary education (51% in 1982 to 55% in 1985). Due to the nearly three year delay in the reporting of migration information from the National Center for Education Statistics and the under-representation of community college students in the ACT data, planners have not had current reliable data on migration of students out of the state to pursue a postsecondary education. Through the survey, those data have been collected.

On the following pages of this report, we have detailed the methodology of the survey study and have summarized our findings in these areas: demographics, high school experiences, postsecondary plans, postsecondary educational plans, college choice factors, and impressions of UNS institutions. Finally, we have provided conclusions and recommendations based on those findings.

METHODOLOGY

The survey questionnaire consisted of forty written questions, and addressed five areas in which information was needed: demographic characteristics of Nevada high school seniors (eight questions); evaluation of their high school experiences (six questions); postsecondary plans (twelve questions); factors important to their choice of a college or other postsecondary institution (seven questions); and impressions of the University of Nevada System (seven questions). The questionnaire, with results, is included in the appendix.

The current study is the first attempt to obtain from the entire Nevada high school senior population data which are specifically relevant to the needs of educational and economic planners in Nevada. Two earlier studies had asked similar questions of portions of the Nevada high school population. A February, 1985 study by the Nevada Department of Education had surveyed 9,600 Nevada high school students (75% of whom were in the eleventh grade) and collected data on their educational plans and satisfaction with high school, among other topics. The UNS Office of Academic Affairs had in March, 1986, conducted a survey of the postsecondary plans and factors influencing college choice of the 2% of Nevada high school seniors identified as Nevada Regents' Scholars.

While the survey questionnaire was under development, each school district office was informed of the plans for the study.

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Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the superintendent of public instruction requested the participation of each district superintendent and high school principal. Following these notifications, survey forms were mailed directly to each Nevada high school, including all private high schools.

Each high school was asked to administer the questionnaire to all seniors between April 30 and May 30, 1986. The form could easily be given in one class period; the suggested time was twenty-five minutes. Provided with the forms was an instruction sheet to be read to the students. All students were instructed to answer the first eighteen questions concerning demographics, postsecondary plans, and opinions about high school. Twenty-two additional questions, concerning factors influencing choice of college and impressions of the University of Nevada System campuses, were to be answered only by students intending to pursue some form of postsecondary training (82%). Students were instructed to select only one answer for each item and to leave an item blank if they did not know the answer. Response rates, therefore, vary for each question. High schools returned completed forms to the Office of Academic Affairs. Five thousand six hundred eighty-one completed forms were returned. This is a response rate of 60% of the 9,413 registered seniors reported in May 1986 by the State Department of Education. Response rate was also calculated by county, with the lowest county response rate being 50% and the highest 95%. All counties with high schools are represented (Table 1). This overall response rate is typical

TABLE 1

Response Rate by County

County	Percent Response
Carson	82
Churchill	76
Clark	58
Douglas	50
Elko	73
Esmeralda	*
Eureka	89
Humboldt	85
Lander	66
Lincoln	95
Lyon	83
Mineral	82
Nye	94
Pershing	81
Storey	80
Washoe	65
White Pine	81

*No high school in Esmeralda County

for surveys conducted in this way and it provides a sample of sufficient size to ensure statistical validity. Nevertheless, there remained the possibility that the returned forms could constitute a biased sample if, for instance, a high school had distributed the survey only to "college-bound" seniors. To check this, most high schools (excepting only those with very high rates of return) were phoned and questioned about the administration of the survey. Inquiries indicated that nearly all high schools administered the questionnaire in government classes, which are required for all senior students.

Response forms were scanned mechanically and summary statistics were computed. Cross-checks among item responses indicated an acceptable level of consistency in reponses. Significant issues were pursued further. Three of these issues, the number and characteristics of Nevada college-bound seniors, the student migration issue, and the significance of college choice factors and students' impressions of UNS institutions, are discussed in the concluding section of this report.

REPORT OF FINDINGS

Demographics

Demographic information was collected on students' age, gender, racial/ethnic identification, family income, and highest level of parents' education. The demographic data indicate that the students who responded are a representative sample of the general high school population. Ninety-three percent of the respondents were seventeen or eighteen years of age, 50.5% were male and 49.5% were female. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents were Caucasian, 8.4% Black, 5% Hispanic, 4.4% Asian, and 3.2% Native American. (The 1980 census showed the racial/ethnic composition of the entire Nevada population as 83.3% Caucasian, 6.4% Black, 6.8% Hispanic, 1.8% Asian, 1.7% Native American.) Fifty-one percent reported a family income of $26,000 per year or more, 27% reported family income of less than $26,000, and 21.5% were unaware of their level of family income. Respondents indicated that 42% of fathers and 49% of mothers had not received any college education, and 12.3% of fathers and 13% of mothers did not graduate from high school. Respondents reported that 28% of fathers and 19% of mothers had graduated from college. This is significantly different from 1980 census data which reported that 15% of Nevadans older than age 25 have completed four or more years of college.

High School Experiences

The majority of Nevada high school seniors are satisfied with their overall high school experience (84%). Most think their high school prepared them adequately or more than adequately for whatever it is they want to do after high school (79%). When asked to rate various aspects of their high school experience, 95% rated their classroom instruction average or better, 75% and 68% rated their school as average or better in providing them with special assistance in math and reading respectively, and 79% rated their school as average or better in providing them with assistance in career education and guidance. While most students ranked these factors in the middle of the scale ("average,""good/above average") the ranking in the extremes of the scale ("outstanding,""poor") are informative. Providing assistance in career education and guidance received the most "outstanding" ratings (14%) and the most "poor" ratings (17%), followed by providing special assistance in math with "outstanding" ratings by 9% and "poor" ratings by 13%.

Thirty-seven percent of responding students described their high school program of study as college preparatory, followed by a general program (29%), vocational program (17%), business program (14%), and other program (3%). Most respondents described themselves as "B" (44%) or "C" (38.5%) students, 14% described themselves as "A" students, and 3.5% as "D" or "F" students. Responses to all questions covering high school experiences can be found in the appendix to this report.

Postsecondary Plans

All students were asked to respond to four general questions about their plans after high school. In an attempt to determine students' immediate plans, they were asked what they were most likely to be doing and where they were most likely to be living the following year. Over half indicated they would most likely go to school (59%), 18% thought they would get a job, 11% were unsure of their plans, 8% planned to join the military, and 3% were likely to care for a home or family. Most expected to live in Nevada (56%), an additional 32% expected to live in the western region of the country, and approximately 12% indicated plans to live in another region. Less than half (41%) wanted additional job search help. Finally, all students were asked if they expected to continue their education in any form after high school. The 391 students who indicated they did not expect to continue their education (7%) were the only group not asked any further questions. Eleven percent were unsure of their future educational plans; 58% expected to attend college in pursuit of a degree, an additional 15% expected to complete a vocational or technical program, and 9% expected to take job-related or self-improvement courses.

Analysis of respondents' postsecondary plans by demographic data provided further insight. In general, as family income increases, a greater percentage of students intend to go to school the following year. Conversely, as level of family income declines, the greater the likelihood that the student will join

the military, get a job, care for home or family, or be undecided about next year plans. However, no matter what the parents' level of income, at least half the respondents plan to attend school (Table 2).

TABLE 2

Next Year Plans by Income

% Students by income who plan to:	Income (in thousands)				
	Under 15	15-25	26-40	Over 40	Don't Know
Join military	9.3	9.9	8.5	5.9	8.2
Get a job	19.2	20.1	18.5	11.7	23.7
Care for home or family	5.6	5.1	2.9	1.5	3.1
Go to school	54.0	54.3	59.8	72.3	49.7
Undecided	11.9	10.6	10.3	8.5	15.2

A similar pattern is seen with students' self-reported grade point average; that is, the higher the GPA, the more likely the student is to attend college; the lower the GPA, the more likely the student is to join the military, get a job, care for home or family, or be undecided about next year plans. However, it is interesting to note that 16% of the "A" students and 33% of the "B" students do not plan to attend school the year after high school. While most of these students indicate other plans, 4.3% of "A" students and 9.2% of "B" students are undecided about

their plans. This may indicate a lack of knowledge of viable postsecondary programs by these students and that issue is discussed at the conclusion of this report (Table 3).

TABLE 3

Next Year Plans by Grade Point Average

% Students with GPA who plan to:	High School Grade Point Average				
	A	B	C	D	F
Join military	3.1	6.0	11.7	15.9	9.5
Get a job	6.3	15.3	25.2	34.4	19.0
Care for home or family	2.3	2.5	3.8	5.3	33.3
Go to school	84.0	67.0	43.9	25.8	14.3
Undecided	4.3	9.2	15.3	18.5	23.8

Most students planning to leave the state in the year following high school graduation appear to leave to attend school, followed by a smaller percentage who leave for a job or to join the military (Table 4). More "B" and "C" students stay in Nevada than "A" students (Table 5).

TABLE 4

Students' Next Year Place of Residence
by
Next Year Postsecondary Plans

% Students by residence who plan to:	Students' Next Year Place of Residence				
	Nevada	California	Nevada Border State	Another Western State	Other Area of Country
Join military	2.6	10.9	3.7	13.5	30.7
Get a job	22.7	15.2	9.0	15.3	12.6
Care for home or family	3.1	4.2	3.1	4.9	2.4
Go to school	59.6	61.3	76.6	54.6	40.2
Undecided	12.0	8.4	7.6	11.7	14.1

TABLE 5

Students' Next Year Place of Residence
by
Grade Point Average

% Students by GPA planning to reside in:	High School Grade Point Average				
	A	B	C	D	F
Nevada	43.2	57.8	58.7	49.7	20.0
California	24.0	14.9	17.5	15.7	10.0
Nevada Border State	14.9	12.8	8.7	11.7	20.0
Other Western	3.4	3.3	2.3	2.6	5.0
Other Area of Country	14.5	11.1	12.7	20.9	45.0

Postsecondary Educational Plans

A comparison of students' educational plans with demographic data reveals significant differences between students. In general, Nevada men are less likely than women to attend college to pursue a degree and more likely to enter a vocational or technical program or not to continue their education at all. Minorities, with the exception of Asian students, are generally under-represented in plans for a college degree program and over-represented in plans for vocational/technical programs or in not planning to continue their education. The majority of "A" (86%) and "B" (67%) students plan to pursue a college degree, while the majority of "C" students plan either to go to college (40%) or complete a vocational/technical program (22%). As family income increases, students are more likely to plan to attend college in pursuit of a degree and less likely to plan to complete a vocational/technical program or enroll in job-related classes classes (Tables 6 and 7).

TABLE 6

Students' Postsecondary Educational Plans
by
Gender, Racial/Ethnic Identification, and Family Income

Postsecondary educational plans:	% Students by Gender		% Students by Racial/Ethnic Identification					% Students by Family Income				
	Male (50%)	Female (49%)	Black (8%)	Native American (3%)	Caucasian (80%)	Hispanic (5%)	Asian (4%)	Under 15K (8%)	15K-25K (19%)	26K-40K (26%)	Over 40K (25%)	Don't Know (22%)
Take job-related or self-improvement course	41	54	12.3	6.8	70.6	6.2	4.0	10.3	20.5	25.3	16.8	27.1
Complete vo/tech program	54	44	10.4	4.8	75.4	6.4	2.9	10.9	22.1	27.6	16.7	22.7
Attend college, pursue degree	48	52	6.7	1.9	82.9	3.7	4.8	7.1	18.3	26.4	31.5	16.7
Not continue education	63	36	9.1	5.0	76.0	5.5	4.4	9.2	17.6	22.3	14.1	36.9
Unsure	55	45	11.7	3.4	72.2	8.4	4.9	9.3	20.3	24.6	16.3	29.6

TABLE 7

Students' Grade Point Average
by
Postsecondary Education Plans

% Students by GPA who plan to:	High School Grade Point Average				
	A	B	C	D	F
Job-related/self-improvement courses	3.9	9.1	12.5	11.9	15.0
Complete vo/tech program	4.6	11.4	21.9	23.2	5.0
Attend college to pursue a degree	85.7	66.9	40.3	23.2	20.0
Do not plan to continue education	2.1	4.5	10.2	17.9	55.0
Unsure	3.7	8.2	15	23.8	5.0

Early Postsecondary Decisions and College Entrance Exams

Students who plan to continue their education after high school make that decision early. Forty-five percent reported making the decision in their freshman year or before, 27% decided in their sophomore or junior year, and 17% decided in their senior year. Five hundred seventy-two students (11%) were still undecided if they would attend college in the last month of their senior year.

Almost two-thirds of the students who plan to continue their education take a college entrance exam. Twenty-seven percent had taken both the SAT and the ACT exams, 25% had taken only the ACT exam, and 9% had taken only the SAT exam.

Institutions of Choice

A total of 5,191 students reported an intention to enroll in a postsecondary education program. The majority (60%) of Nevada high school seniors planning to continue their education prefer to attend a public institution rather than a private college or university. Approximately 40% intend to enroll in a two-year or community college, and 60% at a four-year school. Thirty-nine percent of the students who plan to attend a community college plan to enroll at Clark County Community College, 20% at Truckee Meadows Community College, 8% at Western Nevada Community College, and 5% at Northern Nevada Community College. Over 600 students (28%) indicate they will most likely attend a community college out of state. Fifty-seven percent of the students who plan to attend a four-year college, plan to do so in Nevada; 25.5% at University of Nevada-Reno, 27.5% at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and 4% at private Nevada colleges. One thousand five hundred ninety-seven (43%) intend to enroll out of state. A total of 2,221 students (43%) reported plans to leave Nevada to pursue postsecondary education. Fifty-two percent of "A" students, 36% of "B" students, and 27% of "C" students intend to leave Nevada. Table 8 shows the distribution of students by self-reported high school grade point average and the student's postsecondary institution of choice.

TABLE 8

Institution of Choice
by
Student High School Grade Point Average

% Students by GPA who plan to attend:	High School Grade Point Average		
	A	B	C
4 Yr. Institution			
UNR	24	28	24
UNLV	15	27	34
Private Nevada	3	3	6
Out-of-State	58	42	36
2 Yr. Institution			
CCCC	34	40	40
NNCC	5	4	6
TMCC	21	20	20
WNCC	11	8	8
Out-of-State	29	28	26

Student Migration

Students were asked two additional questions in order to gain futher insight into student migration patterns. Forty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that if all other factors such as cost, academic reputation, and availability of programs of study were equal, they would prefer to attend college in another state. Thirty-one percent would stay in Nevada and 22% were not sure where they preferred to attend. Twenty percent indicated that their choice of residence upon completing their education was Nevada, 41% indicated another state, and 39% were unsure where they would live.

Student Financial Support

Most students (86%) expect to work to help fund their post-secondary education. Seventy-eight percent expect their parents or other relatives to help fund their education, and 66% expect some assistance from grants, scholarships, or loans (Table 9).

TABLE 9

Sources of Financial Support for Postsecondary Education

Sources:	% Students Reporting Major Contribution	% Students Reporting Minor Contribution	% Students Reporting No Contribution
Parents, spouse, relatives	42	36	22
Grants, scholarships, loans	28	38	34
Part-time jobs/summer employment	39	47	14

College Choice Factors

Students rated seven college choice factors that may have influenced their selection of a postsecondary institution. Each factor was rated on the following scale: "very important", "somewhat important", "not important", "did not consider." Students rated factors as "very important" in this way:

availability of a particular program of study	63%
availability of financial aid/scholarship	41%
academic reputation of institution	37%
geographic location	32%
type of housing available	27%
influence of friends/family	27%
availability of credits through a credit testing program	22%

Students with higher reported grade point averages ranked "academic reputation" and "availability of a particular program of study" as "very important" choice factors more frequently. Fifty-five percent of "A" students, 39% of "B" students, and 27% of "C" students rated "academic reputation" as "very important." Seventy percent of "A" students, 65% of "B" students, and 57% of "C" students rated "availability of particular program of study" as "very important."

When the "very important" and "somewhat important" responses are combined, a ranking of choice factors that are considered significant results in the following percentages:

availability of a particular program of study	91%
academic reputation of institution	83%
geographic location	76%
availability of financial aid/scholarship	71%
influence of friends/family	68%
type of housing available	65%
availability of credits through a credit testing program	57%

Student Impressions of UNS Institutions

In an effort to learn more about Nevada high school seniors' impressions of UNS institutions, students were asked to indicate level of agreement with five statements. Overall, seniors reported positive impressions of UNS institutions. Sixty-six percent think the cost of attending a UNS campus is reasonable and 51% think sufficient financial aid is available for students who need assistance. Sixty percent think UNS campuses have high quality academic programs, and 56% think at least one campus has a high quality program in their intended subject area. Only the statement, "students must be above average to be admitted to UNR and UNLV," had a lower percentage of students in agreement (23%) than in disagreement (65%). The percentage of students who responded "don't know" to these statements is informative. While it is to be expected that a certain number of students would not be familiar with all aspects of UNS campuses, a greater proportion seem to be unaware of financial aid information than other information. There are also significant numbers of Nevada seniors who are unaware of UNS program offerings (Table 10).

TABLE 10

Students' Impressions of UNS Institutions

Impressions:	% Students who:				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
UNS campuses have high quality academic programs	7	53	14	4	22
Cost of attending a UNS campus is reasonable	15	51	12	4	18
UNS campuses provide sufficient financial aid for students who need assistance	10	41	12	4	34
Students must be above average to be admitted to UNR or UNLV	5	18	47	18	12
At least one campus has a high quality program in my subject area	15	41	14	7	23

Students' level of agreement with these statements was cross-tabulated with the location of their intended postsecondary institution. In two cases this comparison was significant. Seventy percent of students remaining in Nevada agree that at least one campus has a high quality academic program in their area, while only 40% of students leaving the state agreed with this statement. Similarly, 71% of students remaining in Nevada agreed that UNS campuses have high quality academic programs, while only 47% of students leaving the state agreed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis and interpretation of the survey data suggest three areas for further discussion: the impact on the Nevada postsecondary educational system of the number and diversity of students planning to enroll in postsecondary programs, recruitment concerns for UNS institutions, and the student migration issue.

The survey results clearly indicate that a large proportion (82%) of Nevada high school seniors intend to continue their education in some fashion beyond high school. While most students expect to pursue a two- or four-year degree program (58%), there is also demand for vocational/technical programs (15%) and job-related or self-improvement courses (9%). Fifty-nine percent of the survey respondents indicated they planned to go to school during the year following their high school graduation and by inference, it appears that about 23% will delay their postsecondary educational program for various reasons.

The University of Nevada System is committed to providing equal access to high quality educational programs for all Nevadans. As population increases in the state and as students act on their intent to enroll in postsecondary programs, the system should prepare for increased demands on its services. Not only will the system need to serve more students, but it is likely that in Nevada as in the rest of the nation, the profile of the typical student will continue to change. The mix of older students entering higher education for the first time will continue to grow as students delay their educational programs or

"drop in" for job-related or self-improvement courses. Students carrying less that the full-time load of credits may also increase as more students combine work with educational plans. Eighty-six percent of responding Nevada students indicated they expect to work to help fund their educational program.

While it is encouraging to see the number of Nevada students who intend to continue their education, one should also look at those students who either don't plan to continue or are unsure if they will continue their education. Whether or not a student wishes to pursue a postsecondary educational program, it is imperative that he or she have access to that program should he or she wish to do so. A serious barrier to access can be economic cost of a program, both in tuition, fees and expenses, and in the lost wages while enrolled in that program. Survey data clearly show that as family income decreases, so do students' intentions to continue their education. It is important that UNS institutions strive to continue to provide scholarships, financial aid, grants, and employment assistance to students who need it. It is also just as important that they communicate the availability of such programs to high school seniors. Seventy-one percent of survey respondents rated the availability of aid programs as important in their selection of a college, while 34% of respondents indicated no knowledge of such aid programs at UNS institutions.

The survey data provide informative insight into student college choice factors and also student impressions of UNS institutions. Many of these data could be used to assist and

target UNS recruitment efforts. Students tell us they decide to continue their postsecondary education early. Seventy-two percent have made their decision by their senior year and an additional 17% decide during that year. Only 11% are still unsure of postsecondary educational plans in the last month of their senior year. Students also tell us that the choice factors that influenced their college decisions most were the availability of a particular program of study, the availability of financial aid or scholarship programs, and the academic reputation of an institution. When asked about their impressions of UNS institutions, these same students reported the greatest level of ignorance about financial aid programs (34%) and availability of a high quality program in their intended area of study (23%). In general, students report a positive impression of UNS institutions, but significant numbers of students are unaware of UNS offerings in exactly the areas they indicate as most influencial in their institutional choice. Early dissemination of this important information could aid UNS recruitment efforts.

Despite any institution's best recruitment efforts, a certain number of students will seek their postsecondary educational experience elsewhere. If students make an informed decision to leave Nevada to attend school, we wish them well. If, however, they are choosing out-of-state schools or are choosing not to attend any school because they are lacking information on financial aid, availability of programs of study,

or have an incorrect assumption of the academic reputation of an institution, then educators must be concerned and strive to correct this problem.

The issue of student migration to out-of-state schools is tied closely to the recruitment issues discussed above. Nevada is in fact a state whose out-migration of postsecondary students is greater than its in-migration of students. The concern has been that a greater proportion of "A" students leaves the state causing what has been called a "brain drain." Survey data support this concern.

Forty-three percent of the survey respondents who intend to pursue postsecondary education plan to enroll in a program out of state. When students' postsecondary plans are cross-tabulated with grade point average and compared to this figure, it is evident that a disproportionate number of "A" students (52%) do leave the state. An even greater number of "A" students planning to enroll in a four-year program (58%) leave the state.

Survey results do not tell us why these students leave the state, but they do provide some insight into what may have influenced their decision. As a student's grade point average increased, the student was more likely to consider the factors of academic reputation and availability of a particular program of study very important in selection of an institution. Students' impressions of UNS institutions also varied depending on where they intended to enroll for their postsecondary education. Seventy percent of students remaining in Nevada agree that at least one UNS campus has a high quality academic program in their

area of study, only 40% of students leaving the state agreed with this statement. Similarly, 71% of students remaining in Nevada agreed that UNS campuses have high quality academic programs, while only 47% of students leaving the state agreed. This seems to indicate that students may leave to attend institutions outside of Nevada because they believe Nevada institutions do not have a high quality program in their area or may not have the academic reputation of another institution.

Students were also asked if all factors such as cost, academic reputation, and availability of program of study were equal, where would they prefer to attend school? Forty-seven percent indicated they would prefer to attend in another state, perhaps indicating a desire for change of location only. These results suggest that it is not easy to categorize why students leave the state and UNS institutions may need a variety of techniques to attract these students.

Overall, the results of the survey of Nevada high school seniors are gratifying. The response rate was high and provided statistically valid data. Nevada high school seniors report satisfaction with their high school experience and feel well prepared for what they want to do after high school. Significant numbers intend to enroll in some postsecondary educational program and most seniors have a positive impression of Nevada's public postsecondary educational system.

It is our intent to continue surveying Nevada high school seniors and as a historical data base is built, it should serve

the state well. For the first time, valuable comprehensive and timely data on Nevada's high school seniors and their post-secondary plans are available to the state.

APPENDIX

NEVADA HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR SURVEY[1]

This survey of seniors asks about your impressions of your high school, and also about what you intend to do the first year after your graduation from high school. The survey has been developed by the University of Nevada System in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Education. The results of this survey will be used to better meet the educational needs of Nevada high school graduates.

Please answer questions 1-18. Students planning to continue with a postsecondary education; that is, any organized education, learning, or training beyond high school, should also complete questions 19-40.

Please try to answer all questions. If you cannot answer a question, leave it blank and go on to the next question. Place your answers on the answer sheet provided, not on the survey form. Use a #2 soft lead pencil to fill in the space corresponding to your answer. If you wish to change your response to an item, erase your first mark completely and then blacken the correct space. Select only one response for each question.

Please do not identify yourself on either the survey or the answer sheet. Place only your high school code on the answer sheet. Your individual responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your help and cooperation.

1) What is your age?

-0- A) 15 or under
1% B) 16
37% C) 17
57% D) 18
5% E) 19 or over

2) What is your sex?

50% A) Male
49% B) Female
1% unspecified

3) How do you describe yourself? (choose only one)

8% A) Afro-American/Black
3% B) American Indian, Alaskan Native
80% C) Caucasian/White
5% D) Hispanic
4% E) Asian-American, Oriental, Pacific Islander

4) What is the highest level of education completed by your father or male guardian? (If you do not know, leave blank)

12% A) Less than a high school diploma
30% B) A high school diploma
30% C) Some college, business school, or trade school
12% D) Bachelor's degree
16% E) Graduate or professional degree

[1]Figures may not total due to rounding.

5) What is the highest level of education completed by your mother or female guardian? (If you do not know, leave blank)

13% A) Less than a high school diploma
36% B) A high school diploma
32% C) Some college, business school, or trade school
10% D) Bachelor's degree
9% E) Graduate or professional degree

6) Which of the following best describes the program of high school courses that you took?

14% A) Business or commercial
16% B) Vocational - occupational
37% C) College preparatory
29% D) General
4% E) Other

7) Which of the following is closest to your overall high school grade average?

14% A) A
44% B) B
39% C) C
3% D) D
0 E) F

8) Which category best describes your total family income?

8% A) Under $15,000 per year
19% B) Between $15,000 and $25,000 per year
26% C) Between $26,000 and $40,000 per year
25% D) Over $40,000 per year
22% E) Don't know

Questions 9-14 ask you to rate your high school experience. Please try to be honest and fair; answer in terms of your own experience or observations and not in terms of what you may have heard from other students.

9) How do you rate your overall satisfaction with your high school experience?

9% A) Exceptionally well satisfied
24% B) More than adequately satisfied
51% C) Adequately satisfied
13% D) Less than adequately satisfied
3% E) Very poorly satisfied

10) How do you rate your classroom instruction?

6.5% A) Outstanding
46% B) Good, above average
43% C) Average
4.5% D) Poor

11) How do you rate your high school at giving you special assistance in reading?

5.5% A) Outstanding
21% B) Good, above average
41.5% C) Average
13% D) Poor
19% E) Not applicable

12) How do you rate your high school at giving you special assistance in mathematics?

9% A) Outstanding
29% B) Good, above average
37% C) Average
13% D) Poor
12% E) Not applicable

13) How do you rate your school at giving you assistance in career education and guidance?

14% A) Outstanding
33% B) Good, above average
33% C) Average
17% D) Poor
3% E) Not applicable

14) How well do you think your high school prepared you to do the things you want to do after high school (such as get a job, or go to college)?

11% A) Exceptionally well
24% B) More than adequately
44% C) Adequately
16% D) Less than adequately
5% E) Very poorly

15) What are you most likely to do next year?

8.1% A) Join the military
18.4% B) Get a job
3.2% C) Care for a home and/or family
59.1% D) Go to school
11.2% E) Undecided, or other

16) Would you like help finding out how to apply for and interview for a job?

41% A) Yes
48% B) No
11% C) Not sure

17) Where are you most likely to be living next year?

56% A) Nevada
17% B) California
11.5% C) Utah, Arizona, Idaho, or Oregon
3% D) Another Western state
12.5% E) Other

18) Do you expect to continue your education after high school?

9% A) Yes, I expect to take a few job related or self improvement courses
15% B) Yes, I expect to complete a vocational or technical program
58% C) Yes, I expect to attend college and pursue a degree
11% D) Not sure
7% E) No, I do not expect to continue my education

If you chose answer "E" to question 18, you have completed the survey. Thank you for your assistance.

If you chose answer "A", "B", "C", or "D" to question #18, please continue with questions 19-40.

19) Which type of school do you prefer to attend?

60% A) A public university, college or community college
14% B) A private university, college or community college
15% C) A vocational-technical school
4% D) Other
7% E) No real preference

20) When did you decide to continue your education after high school?

45% A) 9th grade or earlier
11% B) 10th grade
16% C) 11th grade
17% D) 12th grade
11% E) Not sure

21) If you plan to attend a 4-year college or university, which institution will you most likely attend? (If you do not plan to attend a 4-year college or university, leave blank.)

25.5% A) University of Nevada Reno
27.5% B) University of Nevada, Las Vegas
4% C) A private college or university in Nevada
43% D) A university or college outside of Nevada

22) If you plan to attend a community college, which institution will you most likely attend? (If you do not plan to attend a community college, leave blank.)

39% A) Clark County Community College (Las Vegas area)
5% B) Northern Nevada Community College (Elko, Ely area)
20% C) Truckee Meadows Community College (Reno, Sparks area)
8% D) Western Nevada Community College (Carson City, Fallon area)
28% E) A community college outside of Nevada

23) Which college entrance exams have you taken?

25% A) ACT only
9% B) SAT only
27% C) Both ACT and SAT
2% D) Other entrance exams
37% E) I have not taken an entrance exam

24) How much do you anticipate parents, spouse, or other relatives will contribute to the funding of your education after high school?

42% A) Major source of funds
36% B) Minor source of funds
23% C) Not a source of funds

25) How much do you anticipate educational grants, scholarships, or loans will contribute to the funding of your education after high school?

28% A) Major source of funds
38% B) Minor source of funds
34% C) Not a source of funds

26) How much do you anticipate income from employment (work study, summer employment, etc.) will contribute to the funding of your education after high school?

39% A) Major source of funds
47% B) Minor source of funds
14% C) Not a source of funds

Questions #27-33 ask you to rate factors that were important in your selection of a postsecondary institution.

27) How important is the academic reputation of the institution to your selection?

37% A) Very important
46% B) Somewhat important
10% C) Not important
7% D) Did not consider

28) How important is the availability of a particular program of study to your selection?

63% A) Very important
28% B) Somewhat important
5% C) Not important
4% D) Did not consider

29) How important is the geographical location of the institution to your selection?

32% A) Very important
44% B) Somewhat important
19% C) Not important
5% D) Did not consider

30) How important is the availability of financial aid or scholarships to your selection?

41% A) Very important
30% B) Somewhat important
20% C) Not important
9% D) Did not consider

31) How important is the availability of credits awarded through a credit testing program to your selection?

22% A) Very important
35% B) Somewhat important
23% C) Not important
20% D) Did not consider

32) How important is the type of housing available to your selection?

27% A) Very important
38% B) Somewhat important
26% C) Not important
9% D) Did not consider

33) How important is the influence of friends and family on your selection?

27% A) Very important
41% B) Somewhat important
25% C) Not important
7% D) Did not consider

We are interested in your impressions of the University of Nevada System no matter where you plan to enroll in a postsecondary program. The schools in the University of Nevada System are the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the University of Nevada Reno, Clark County Community College, Northern Nevada Community College, Truckee Meadows Community College and Western Nevada Community College. Based on your impressions of these schools, please indicate your level of agreement with the statements in #34-40 below.

34) I think University of Nevada System campuses have high-quality academic programs.

7% A) Strongly agree
53% B) Agree
14% C) Disagree
4% D) Strongly disagree
22% E) Don't know

35) I think the cost of attending a University of Nevada System campus is reasonable.

15% A) Strongly agree
51% B) Agree
12% C) Disagree
4% D) Strongly disagree
18% E) Don't know

36) I think University of Nevada System campuses provide sufficient financial aid for students who need assistance.

9% A) Strongly agree
41% B) Agree
12% C) Disagree
4% D) Strongly disagree
34% E) Don't know

37) I think students must be above average to be admitted to the University of Nevada-Reno and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

5% A) Strongly agree
18% B) Agree
47% C) Disagree
18% D) Strongly disagree
12% E) Don't know

38) I think at least one University of Nevada System campus has a high-quality program in the subject area I plan to pursue.

15% A) Strongly agree
41% B) Agree
14% C) Disagree
7% D) Strongly disagree
23% E) Don't know

39) If all other factors such as cost, academic reputation, availability of program of study were equal, would you prefer to attend college in Nevada or in another state?

31% A) In Nevada
47% B) In another state
22% C) Not sure

40) Where do you plan to live when you finish all your schooling?

20% A) Nevada
41% B) Another state
39% C) Don't know

You have completed the survey, thank you for your help.

the state well. For the first time, valuable comprehensive and timely data on Nevada's high school seniors and their post-secondary plans are available to the state.